Vernon

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ALDON SPINNING MILLS CORP. WILL BE CLOSING AFTER 27 YEARS IN TALCOTTVILLE SECTION OF VERNON —[Times Photo by S. Robert Pugliese
. . . some 150 textile workers will be out of jobs due to closing caused by foreign competition

Closing of Aldon Spinning Mills —A Sad Event for Entire Town

By PAUL GALLAGHER
Times Staff Writer

The Alfred W. Cavedon family is ashamed and reluctant to talk about it, the town of Vernon is disappointed and some 150 textile workers—soon to be out of work—are still numb with disbelief.

But with a distinguished 27-year history as one of Vernon's largest and most successful employers, the Cavedons announced with catacvlsmic suddenness Tuesday that their family-owned and operated woolen mills — the Alden Spinning Mills Corp. of Talcottville — is going out of business.

Within 10 days, they predicted, employes at the mill, most of whom are middle aged or older, would be laid off and their plant would be closed down for good.

"We're not proud of it," Bob Cavedon, a young executive with the firm confided to newsmen. "The Cavedons aren't quitters. We've never undertaken anything we haven't been successful in," he said, "but it is simply a problem of not being able to compete dollarwise."

His father, Alfred Cavedon, president of the mills, worked quietly at a nearby desk. It isn't a happy time for the family, he said, or a good time for publicity. But his son continued with the story.

It was the cost of labor that was killing U. S. woolen mills and was forcing the family out of business, he said. Foreign companies could hire workers for pennies an hour and easily undercut prices charged by American companies, and the situation was getting worse rather than better.

In 1960, Aldon employes were making $1.44 an hour more than the average Japanesse textile worker, Cavedon said. Today, they make $1.98 an hour more, indicating that the wage difference "is growing instead of getting smaller."

The flood of synthetics into the American market has not made the situation any better, Cavedon said. But synthetics, in themselves, would not break the woolen industry. The cost of processing wool has been shaved to a minimum and U.S. plants are "as automated as any."

"The important thing in textiles is the labor," he said, and the finer the woolen product, the more labor is needed.

Aldon Spinning Mills has been a "specialty" mill for years, producing high grade yarns from a variety of Indian and Australian wools. Despite plant equipment cos-

ROBERT CAVEDON
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ting well in excess of $3 million, workers still line mills 24 hours a day, pulling yarn and preparing spools for shipping.

Most of them — once part of a booming New England industry — knew that woolen mills were on their way out. Many neighboring mills had closed, others moved South where labor was less expensive.

But largely unskilled and "too old" to train for other jobs, they hoped to finish their working days before the industry gave way beneath them.

"We're all too old to get another job," said Claude Gadwah, an "all around man" at the mill. "Nobody wants you after you're 50. There are very few young ones here."

Although not optimistic

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